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Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
----------041479 221300Z /53
O R 221142Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 726
INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

C O N F I D E N T I AL SECTION 1 OF 2 MADRID 4730

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PINT, SP
SUBJECT: TROUBLES IN THE CENTER

REF: MADRID 4608

SUMMARY: DESPITE THE PRESS'S ATTENTION TO CABINET FORMATION, A PRINCIPAL UCD FIGURE HAS TOLD US THE MAJOR ISSUE TODAY IS SUAREZ'S DESIRE TO TURN THE UCD COALITION INTO A SINGLE POLITICAL PARTY NOW. SUAREZ, CONCERNED AT GONZALEZ'S SUCCESS, IS USING HIS LEVERAGE OVER CABINET POSTS TO FORCE THE ISSUE. FOR THOSE PRESSED INTO THE UCD LISTS AS SUAREZ'S MEN A SINGLE SUAREZ PARTY POSES NO PROBLEMS, BUT FOR THOSE PARTIES WITHIN THE UCD WHO HAVE SOUGHT TO MAINTAIN AN IDENTITY, PARTICULARLY THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS AND THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS, THIS WOULD BE A BIG PILL TO SWALLOW, AT LEAST SO EARLY IN THE GAME. DEPENDING ON WHETHER SUAREZ PRESSES AHEAD, THERE COULD BE DEFECTIONS FROM SUAREZ'S FORMAL MAJORITY THOUGHT NOT, WE THINK, FROM MAJORITIES IN SUPPORT OF SUAREZ'S PROGRAMS. IN THIS, WE JUDGE THAT THOUGH SUAREZ MUST BEGIN TO LOOK AHEAD TO FUTURE ELECTIONS AN EFFORT NOW TO TURN A WINNING BUT DISPARATE COALITION INTO A DISCIPLINED SINGLE PARTY OVERNIGHT MAY BE AN UNNECESSARY EXPENSE
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OF POLITICAL CAPITAL, EVEN THOUGH WE ASSUME HE CAN WORK HIS WILL WITH MOST, IF NOT ALL, THE UCD. END SUMMARY.

1. THE PRESS, BASED ON HINTS FROM SUAREZ'S AIDES AND CONTACTS WITH POLITICAL LEADERS HAS NOW COME AROUND TO CONCLUSION IN REFTEL, I. E. THAT SUAREZ WILL LIKELY FORM A MINORITY GOVERNMENT LEANING HEAVILY UPON THE UCD.

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BOTH THE CATALAN MODERATES OF PUJOL (10 SEATS) AND THE
BASQUE MODERATES (PNV--8 SEATS) HAVE INDICATED PUBLICLY
THEY DO NOT WANT ANY MINISTERIAL POSITIONS BUT HAVE ALSO
INDICATED PRIVATELY THAT DEPENDING ON HOW THE AUTONOMY
ISSUE GOES (SEPTEL) THEY WOULD BE WILLING TO HELP
ON PRESSING LEGISLATION, ENOUGH VOTES FOR AN ABSOLUTE
MAJORITY IN THE LOWER HOUSE WHERE, IN FACT, ONLY A SIMPLE
MAJORITY IS NECESSARY.

2. THERE HAS BEEN MUCH LESS ATTENTION IN THE PRESS TO THE
ISSUE OF CENTRIST POLITICAL ORGANIZATION, WHICH WE ARE
TOLD IN FACT LIES AT THE ROOT OF THE CURRENT DISCUSSIONS
BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND UCD LEADERS.

3. FRANCISCO FERNANDEZ ORDONEZ, THE AMBITIOUS AND
POLITICALLY ASTUTE LEADER OF TE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC
FRACTION WITH SUAREZ'S UCD LUNCHED WITH ME YESTERDAY
AND I REPORT THE CONVERSATIN BECAUSE, DEPENDING ON
HOW MATTERS TURN OUT, HE MAY BE A KEY FIGURE IN THE
NEW GOVERNMENT AND, AT ALL EVENTS, IS A MAJOR ACTOR
IN THE DRAMA OF POLITICAL ORGANIZATION AND CABINET
FORMATION NOW UNDER WAY. HE WAS QUITE CONCERNED, HAVING
TALKED WITH SUAREZ WITHIN THE LAST 24 HOURS. HE SAID
SUAREZ HAD BECOME QTE OBSESSED UNQTE WITH FELIPE
GONZALEZ'S SUCCESS AND THE LATTER'S CLAIM TO HAVE
THE LARGEST POLITICAL PARTY IN SPAIN BECAUSE SUAREZ'S
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GROUP WAS ONLY A MOTLEY COALITION. SUAREZ WANTS TO
TURN THE UCD INTO A SINGLE PARTY NOW SUBMERGING THE
DIFFERENCES AMONG SOCIAL DEMOCRATS, CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS,
LIBERALS AND THE SUAREZ MEN WHO WERE PRESSED INTO THE
CENTRO LISTS IN LARGE NUMBERS AT THE LAST MINUTE.

4. HE HAD ARGUED WITH SUAREZ THAT THIS WOULD BE SEEN BY THE
PRESS AS A MODERN REINCARNATION OF THE OLD NATIONAL
MOVEMENT, REINFORCING THE FEELING OF ONE MAN IMPOSITION
ENGENDERED BY THE INSERTION OF SUAREZ MEN INTO THE CENTER
LISTS, WHICH GONZALEZ--ACCORDING TO MANY OBSERVERS--USED
WITH GOOD EFFECT DURING THE CAMPAIGN TO ATTRACT SOMETHING
OF A PROTEST VOTE AGAINST OLD REGIME POLITICS.
HE ALSO TOLD SUAREZ HE HE SAID, THAT EVEN IF HE YIELDED,
HE WAS NOT SURE HE COULD PERSUADE HIS PARLIAMENTARY FRACTION
(16 DEPUTIES AND 10 SENATORS) TO DROP THEIR PARTY
IDENTITY. LATER ON A SINGLE PARTY MIGHT BECOME A
POLITICAL NECESSITY, BUT FOR NOW WHAT WAS NEEDED WAS
AN IRON CLAD PACT AMONG THE UCD DEPUTIES ON PARLIAMENT-
ARY DISCIPLINE BEHIND A SUAREZ CABINET AND ITS PROGRAM.

5. SUAREZ, HE SAID, WAS QUITE ADAMANT THOUGH HE MIGHT

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YIELD GRUDGINGLY IF HE FOUND THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC
FRACTION 17 DEPUTIES AND 12 SENATORS), WHO ALSO CHERISH
THEIR IDENTITY, UNWILLING. AT ALL EVENTS, THE NEGOTIATIONS
ON A CABINET WOULD HAVE TO WAIT UPON SUAREZ'S DECISION,
PRESUMABLY WITHIN THE NEXT TWO DAYS, ON WHETHER TO
PUSH AHEAD DESPITE THE STRAIN. SUAREZ,
HE SAID, HAD HELD OUT THE PROSPECT OF FERNANDEZ ORDONEZ'
BECOMING THE CHIEF ECONOMIC MINISTER (SOMETHING THAT
IS ALSO WIDELY RUMORED IN THE PRESS) SHOULE HE GO ALONG
WITH THIS OPERATION. IF HE DID NOT, THEN HE WOULD BE
PRESUMABLY OUT OF THE CABINET, BUT HIS FRACTION WOULD
SUPPORT SUAREZ'S PROGRAMS, SINCE SUAREZ WAS PROPERLY
DETERMINED TO MEET THE SOCIALIST CHALLENGE BY TAKING THE
HIGH GROUND OF A GOVERMMENT PROGRAM AIMED AT SIGNIFICANT
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REFORM.

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
----------041598 221310Z /42
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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 727
INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MADRID 4730

EXDIS

COMMENT: FERNANDEZ ORDONEZ HAS SET FORTH AN IMPORTANT
PART OF THE CABINET AND POLITICAL ORGANIZATION ISSUE,
BUT THERE IS MORE TO IT. PART OF THE STRUGGLE ALSO
INVOLVES THE DESIRE OF THE VARIOUS POLITICAL FRACTIONS
TO MONOPOLIZE THE CABINET POSTS, WHEREAS THERE SEEMS
TO BE A DESIRE ON THE PART OF SUAREZ TO RETAIN
SOME OF HIS CABINET MINISTERS, SUCH AS OREJA,
LAVILLA AND MARTIN VILLA EVEN THOUGHT THEY DID NOT

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STAND FOR OFFICE BUT HAVE BEEN NAMED SENATORS BY THE KING. OREJA'S RETENTION MAKES SENSE BUT MARTIN VILLA--AS INTERIOR MINISTER-- HAS BURNED UP A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF HIS POLITICAL CREDIT, PARTICULARLY IN THE WAKE OF THE MALADROIT HANDLING OF THE ELECTION RETURNS. WE ASSUME THAT IF SUAREZ PUSHES AHEAD WITH THE SINGLE PARTY HE HAS THE CLOUT TO CARRY IT OFF, EVEN IF THERE ARE A FEW DEFECTIONS FROM SUAREZ'S FORMAL MAJORITY, BUT ON THE FACE OF IT THE FORCING OF HIS DISPARATE COALITION INTO A SINGLE PARTY NOW WOULD SEEM TO BE AN UNNECESSARY EXPENSE OF POLITICAL CAPITAL. DELAYS IN THE ELECTIONS RETURNS SUGGEST THE CORTES MAY NOT GO TO WORK UNTIL THE FIRST OR SECOND WEEK OF NEXT MONTH, BUT PRESUMABLY THE CABINET WOULD BE ANNOUNCED AS SOON AS THE RETURNS ARE CERTIFIED--PERHAPS AROUND
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THE 28TH. A SEPTEL IN A LESS RESTRICTED CHANNEL DEALS WITH FERNANDEZ ORDONEZ'S VIEWS ON FELIPE GONZALEZ, WITH WHOM HE HAS A DECENT RELATIONSHIP, AND SOME BRIEF OBSERVATIONS ON SPAIN'S ECONOMIC PLIGHT.
STABLER

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